

Message Text

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47

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-10 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 INRE-00

NSCE-00 USIE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 DHA-02 OC-05 CCO-00 SY-05

OPR-02 SCCT-01 A-01 SCA-01 OMB-01 ACDA-05 /096 W

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O R 191402Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7775

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON UK

COMMSIXTHFLT

CTF SIX ZERO

CTF SIX ONE

CTF SIX TWO

CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO

FOSIF ROTA SPAIN

FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA

DIA WASHDC

CIA WASHDC

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REF: BEIRUT 15337 (1345Z)

1. SECURITY SITUATION HAS NOT CHANGED APPRECIABLY FROM REPORT SUBMITTED REFTEL, ALTHOUGH SOURCE IN LEBANESE ARMY REPORTED MORNING DEC 19 THAT SECURITY FORCES DETECT SLIGHT TREND TOWARD IMPROVEMENT IN CAPITAL AND COUNTRYSIDE; AS OF 0900 HOURS, NO RPT NO FIRING WAS NOTED IN CENTRAL BEIRUT. WE HAVE SINCE HEARD A FEW SHOTS, BUT PERPETRATORS APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN ARMED ELEMENTS FROM JUMBLATT'S PSP WHO WERE ANNOUNCING THEIR TRIUMPHANT WITHDRAWAL FROM THE INTERNATIONAL HOTEL DISTRICT.

2. PRESS MORNING DEC 19 CARRIES REPORTS OF SOME FIGHTING AND INCIDENTS IN SUBURBS OF CITY AND PROVINCES YESTERDAY AND OVERNIGHT. SITUATION IN AND AROUND ALEY REMAINS TENSE AND INCIDENTS MAY BE CONTINUING. YESTERDAY, LARGE-SCALE EXODUS OF CHRISTIANS FROM ALEY AND ADJACENT VILLAGES APPARENTLY BEGAN AS PREDOMINANTLY DRUZE ELEMENTS LOYAL TO JUMBLATT INVESTED CHRISTIAN POSITIONS IN RETALIATION FOR SEBNAY INCIDENT. AVAILABLE INFORMATION FROM THIS REGION SPEAKS OF BOMBINGS, LOOTINGS, AND KIDNAPPINGS. DISTURBING NOTE WAS INTRODUCED BY REVELATION THAT LAWLESS ELEMENTS HAVE BEEN TAKING HOSTAGES TO OBTAIN ARMS AND MONEY. AS CURRENT CRISIS ENTERS NINTH MONTH, WE ARE BEGINNING TO SEE ONE OF LAST TABOOS CRUMBLE VERIFIED REPORTS THAT WOMEN ARE BEING HELD TO RANSOM. WHILE WE DOUBT THAT THESE ACTIONS ARE ORDERED OR SANCTIONED BY JUMBLATT, PRESS NEVERTHELESS REPORTS KIDNAPPING OF FOUR (APPARENTLY CHRISTIAN) WOMEN IN ALEY, AT LEAST TWO OF WHOM HAVE BEEN RELEASED UNHARMED.

3. ELSEWHERE IN COUNTRY, CLASHES CONTINUED IN TRIPOLI AREA DEC 18, BUT EFFORTS, INVOLVING ZUHAYR MOHSEN OF SA'IQA, ARE UNDER WAY TO ARRANGE A MORE DURABLE TRUCE BETWEEN LEFTIST/MUSLIM FORCES IN TRIPOLI AND CHRISTIAN VILLAGERS IN SURROUNDING AREA. YESTERDAY'S BATTLES APPARENTLY DID NOT INVOLVE THE GOL ARMORED VEHICLES WHICH BOTH SIDES HAD "REQUISITIONED." TROOPS LED BY FAROUK MUQADDAM ARE REPORTED TO HAVE RELEASED SHIP BEING HELD IN TRIPOLI

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HARBOR AFTER CHEMICAL PLANT THERE AGREED TO DEMANDS REGARDING PAYMENT OF SALARIES TO ITS WORKFORCE. THREE WEST GERMANS KIDNAPPED IN NORTH WERE RELEASED ON INTERVENTION OF SHIITE LEADER, IMAM MUSA AS SADR. ACCORDING TO REPORTS REACHING US, RANSOM DEMAND OF 60,000 LEBANESE POUNDS WAS NOT RPT NOT PAID. ROAD TO SIDON, WHICH WAS CUT LATE AFTERNOON DEC 18 AT DAMOUR, IS EXPECTED TO BE OPENED SOMETIME TODAY.

4. NEWS ON THE POLITICAL FRONT IS SCARCE, ALTHOUGH PAPERS ARE REplete WITH TRADED ACCUSATIONS. PROGRESSIVE FORCES UNDER LEADERSHIP OF KAMAL JUMBLATT MET AFTERNOON OF DEC 18 AND REACHED DECISION TO "SCALE DOWN" THEIR REFORM DEMANDS SOMEWHAT. REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER CONCESSION IS GENUINE SINCE PUBLISHED ACCOUNTS OF NEW DEMANDS MAKES THEM SO VAGUE AND GENERALIZED AS TO COVER ALMOST ANY EVENTUALITY. PAPERS REPORT, HOWEVER, THAT JUMBLATT MAY RETURN SOON TO DAMASCUS AT HEAD OF MUSLIM/PROGRESSIVE DELEGATION TO CONTINUE CONTACTS AND CONSULTATIONS WITH SYRIANS. EMBOFF LEARNED DEC 18 FROM CLOSE CONFIDANT OF KHALED JUMBLATT (FORMER MINISTER IN RASHID AS SOLH GOVT AND ALLY OF KAMAL) THAT KAMAL WAS NOT RPT NOT HAPPY ABOUT HIS RECEPTION DURING HIS RECENT SWING THROUGH GULF STATES AND IS VERY UPSET ABOUT HIS RECEPTION LAST WEEK IN DAMSCUS, WHICH KAMAL COMPARING VERY UNFAVORABLY TO THAT ACCORDED PIERRE GEMAYEL.

5. KNOWLEDGEABLE OBSERVERS ARE TODAY EXPRESSING DOUBT THAT SYRIAN FONMIN KHADDAM, WHOSE IMMINENT ARRIVAL HAS BEEN EXPECTED FOR SEVERAL DAYS, WILL COME TO LEBANON UNTIL HE CAN SEE PIECES OF SETTLEMENT FALLING INTO PLACE. NEW CONSENSUS IS THAT SYRIANS WILL CONTINUE ACTIVELY TO WORK FOR CALM HERE, SUMMONING LEBANESE LEADERS TO DAMASCUS FOR THE NECESSARY HEAD-KNOCKING. JUMBLATT'S ANTICIPATED PILGRIMAGE MAY FIT INTO THIS PATTERN. BAGHDAD INA (A NOT UNIMPEACHABLE SOURCE) HAS JUST REPORTED (FBIS JN190811Y) THE ARRIVAL MORNING DEC 19 OF SYRIAN CHIEF OF STAFF SHIHABI FOR TALKS WITH PRES FRANGIE AND OTHERS. WE CANNOT YET CONFIRM OR DENY THIS REPORT, BUT IT IS PLAUSIBLE THAT SHIHABI MAY HAVE COME TO INFORM LEADERS HERE OF SYRIA'S MODUS OPERANDI.
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6. BOTH CAMILLE CHAMOUN AND AMIN GEMAYEL HAVE MEANWHILE PUBLICLY ACCUSED THE "COMMUNISTS" OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR STIRRING UP THE SEBNAY AND HARET AL GHAWARNE (PHALANGE MOPPING UP OPERATION NEAR ANTELIA A WEEK AGO) INCIDENTS WHICH HAVE BEEN EXERCISING MUSLIM AND LEFTIST OPINION. THESE ATTACKS ARE OF INTEREST SINCE EMBOFF WAS RELIABLY INFORMED THAT PROMINENT MEMBER OF PHALANGE POLITBURO WAS ASSERTING IN PRIVATE O/A DEC 12 THAT, WHEN SMOKE CLEARED, "COMMUNISTS" WOULD BE LEFT HOLDING THE CAN. REMAINS TO BE SEEN, HOWEVER, WHETHER CHRISTIAN RIGHT CAN MAKE CHARGES STICK.
GODLEY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, POLITICAL SITUATION, CIVIL DISORDERS, INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 DEC 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BEIRUT15386
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: DG ALTERED
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750441-1088
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751225/aaaaavxi.tel
Line Count: 167
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 BEIRUT 15337
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 08 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <08 MAY 2003 by ifshinsr>; APPROVED <30 SEP 2003 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SITREP: CIVIL DISORDERS
TAGS: PINS, PORS, LE
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006